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ABSTRACT

This study verified a need for the development of entry-level and continued training methods for educational secretaries in Oklahoma, with special focus on unique problems in the rural setting. The project aimed to: (1) ascertain if there was a statewide need for developing training for educational secretaries; (2) project during what time period the problem of entry-level training would become most critical; (3) determine what job skills are required of an educational secretary; (4) ascertain the most feasible organization to assume responsibility for development and implementation of the training; and (5) determine the preferences for potential solutions. Fifty-three educational secretaries and 52 administrators in public schools with student enrollments of less than 500 in Oklahoma completed surveys to provide data for the study. Nearly 100% of the respondents indicated a need for training development. Data suggest that the years 2000 to 2010 will be a time period when 62.27% of the entire work force will need entry-level training. Training should include the areas of reporting, computer operations, public relations, and banking, with focus on the specialized requirements and laws as they pertain to accountability in education. The researcher determined the Oklahoma State Department of Education, assisted by an advisory committee of educational secretaries, to be the most feasible source of developing a training program. Preferred training solutions were training workshops and a secretarial handbook. Contains extensive appendices. (KS)

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DEVELOPMENT OF ENTRY-LEVEL AND CONTINUED TRAINING
FOR EDUCATIONAL SECRETARIES

A Project Report Presented to the
Faculty of Friends University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Bachelor of Science

by

Vicki Fry

Jim Knight, Instructor

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project was to ascertain if there was recognized need for the development of entry-level and continued training methods for educational secretaries, with special focus on unique problems in the rural setting. Option Three, A Policy Decision Paper, was selected for this research project.

No specialized entry-level training for educational secretaries has been developed in the state of Oklahoma. During the past ten years, the job responsibilities of the secretarial staff in school districts have grown tremendously in direct proportion to the increase in state legislated mandates and federal program accountability. Today's educational secretaries are often asked to assume administrative assistant or business manager roles for which they are not adequately trained.

In the rural school setting, geographical isolation from colleges or vocational technical schools restricts the limited labor pool in obtaining basic secretarial skills, and specialized training for a multiplicity of job roles is nonexistent.

Research questions were answered through five objectives. The first objective was to ascertain if there was a statewide need for developing training for educational secretaries. The

second objective was to project during what time period the problem of entry-level training would become most critical. The third objective was to determine what job skills are required of an educational secretary so that a specialized training program could be developed to focus on those needs. The fourth objective of this research project was to ascertain the most feasible entity or organization to assume responsibility for development and implementation of specialized entry-level training. The fifth objective was to assess the effectiveness and determine preferences for potential solutions.

To gather data for this study, the researcher distributed surveys of differing design to 80 educational secretaries and 80 administrators in public schools of under five hundred student enrollment throughout the state of Oklahoma. The 105 responses to the survey instruments provided a nearly one hundred percent verification of need for training development. Data from these surveys also identified the years 2000 to 2010 as a time period when entry-level training will become critical, with 62.27 percent of the entire secretarial workforce in Oklahoma education becoming entry-level during that ten-year period.

After analysis of the data from this research project, the researcher recommends the development of entry-level training

for educational secretaries be accomplished by the year 2000. The training program should include the areas of reporting, computer operation, public relations, and banking, with focus on the specialized requirements and laws as they pertain to accountability in education. Training programs would be made available on college campuses during the summer, and on video tape by job function, accompanied by a handbook/reference manual.

Since the need for entry-level training was determined to be statewide, the Oklahoma State Department of Education, assisted by an advisory committee of educational secretaries, was determined to be the most feasible source for assuming the development and implementation of such a training program. The Oklahoma State Department of Education requested and received a copy of the results of this research project. Since the purpose of the State Department of Education is to develop solutions for meeting the needs in the field of education and to aid in implementation of those solutions, it is expected that their direction will provide the leadership to meet the needs identified.

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CHAPTER I-DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM

Section 1: Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this project was to develop training for educational secretaries with special attention to unique problems in rural schools.

Section 2 and 3: The Setting, History, and Background of the Problem

Rural schools in Oklahoma usually include kindergarten through twelfth grades which are supervised by one administrator, with from one to three secretaries employed to assist the administrator. Funding cuts and criticism of administrative costs have decreased secretarial staff, even though reporting and bureaucracy have dramatically increased.

In earlier years, the duties of educational secretaries usually were confined to typing, filing, some recordkeeping, and serving as a receptionist. During the past ten years the job responsibilities of the secretarial staff in school districts has grown tremendously in direct proportion to the increased number of state legislated mandates and federal programs. Today's educational secretaries are often asked to assume administrative assistant or business manager roles for which they are not adequately trained.

All federal and state programs have rigid restrictions, rules, and laws for compiling, storing, and reporting information for which the school districts are held accountable by state, federal, and private audits. School districts not in compliance with those laws face loss of funding and possible criminal charges. Because of frequent changes in the laws, rules, and methods for compiling, gathering, storing, and reporting information, it is essential for effective job performance to keep informed of new information. While frequent administrator's meetings are held to update and inform, it would be realistically impossible for an administrator to accurately and effectively relay all information to staff who assist in information maintenance and reporting.

While educational secretaries are usually not denied access to attend meetings specifically designed for administrators, there is loss of time on task to attend those meetings and workshops. Furthermore, most workshops are held in Oklahoma City, which involves a great deal of travel time added to actual attendance at meetings. For schools only having one secretary on staff, or only one secretary responsible for most functions, absence from work creates a work overload for the secretary, and interrupts the normal activity flow of business for schools.

It is not efficient time management and creates frustration for secretaries to set through hours of workshop containing information of which only portions are relevant to the secretaries job responsibilities.

A number of years ago, a national educational secretaries organization was formed, with state affiliations, for the purpose of professional development. The Oklahoma Association of Educational Office Personnel is a state affiliation of the National Association of Educational Office Personnel. This state organization attempts to conduct workshops at their bi-annual meetings, held in October and April, which are designed for conveying only information pertinent to educational secretaries. However, as the beginning of the new fiscal year for school districts is July 1, and with most school districts beginning classes in August, much of the information obtained as early as October should have been implemented July 1 or in August. Even at OAEOP conferences, there are no workshops designed specifically for entry-year secretarial personnel.

At the annual national conference held by NAEOP at Denver, Colorado in July of 1990, one of the agenda items to go before the advisory board is the change of the name of the national organization to National Association of Educational Office Professionals. Many states are

introducing the same proposal to change the word "personnel" to "professionals." The rationale for this agenda item to be placed before the national advisory council is stated as follows:

We think of ourselves as professionals and would like this to be reflected in the name of our Association. It is suggested that NAEO(Personnel) be changed to NAEO(Professionals). A positive statement as to how we feel about ourselves, the job we do, our Association, and how we want to be perceived by others! Initials of the Association remain the same, therefore no logo change would be needed.

This statement is indicative of the desire of educational secretaries nationwide to have the field of work recognized as a profession. However, for a trade or specialized ability to be truly recognized as a profession, there are listed, or at least expected, requirements. One of those requirements is formal education or training. There is currently no existing formal education or training programs of specified curriculum for educational secretaries.

Rural school settings have unique problems that compound the training problem. In most rural schools, there may be only one secretary on staff, or only one secretary who is familiar with specific functions; whereas, in larger schools, several may be employed in each functional department, each able to perform the job tasks of the other. In a rural school if the existing secretary wishes to leave her position, it becomes one of her job

responsibilities to train replacement personnel by apprenticeship. In some situations, she may not be available to perform lengthy training, creating a frustrating dilemma for the administrator, interrupting business activity, and inflecting added stress to new personnel.

The problem of filling vacancies for educational secretaries is compounded in schools in isolated, rural areas. The duties of the educational secretary have grown to include the need for knowledge of federal and state laws, accounting procedures, banking information, and financial expertise. The labor pool in rural areas most often does not include people trained in these areas. Even basic secretarial courses are not easily accessible. For example, the closest in-state college or vocational-technical school is located approximately 88 miles from our location. Therefore, even if formal training and curriculum were to be developed, accessibility would remain a problem to isolated, rural schools.

Section 4: Scope of the Project

The scope of this project will focus on the development of training designed for the professional development of educational office personnel with special attention to the unique problems of rural schools in

isolated areas. This project should identify the restraining forces, as well as the driving forces, analyze those factors, and identify potential solutions.

Section 5: Importance/Significance of the Project

In view of predictions that government reporting and programs will continue to increase in years to come, as well as pressures to reduce administrative costs potentially reducing existing administrative staff, existing personnel must receive specially designed training in job tasks and time management to efficiently and accurately perform increased job functions and responsibilities.

CHAPTER II - LITERATURE REVIEW

Published literature available on the area of training for educational secretaries is extremely limited, and only one published survey study has been found to date.

Section 1: Secretarial Work Force-Projections and Facts

Webster's definition of a secretary in 1961 was "a person employed to keep records, take care of correspondence, and other writing tasks, etc. for an organization or individual" (Webster, 1961). In 1971 the definition was slightly expanded and stated, "one employed to handle correspondence and manage routine and detail work for a superior" (Webster, 1971). The job definition of the secretary has continued to expand and will continue to do so.

In 1986, 14.2 million were employed in administrative support and clerical occupations (NCWW, 1987). Of all employed women in 1989, the largest percent were employed in clerical and administrative support positions, comprising 27.8% of the total female work force (NCWW, 1990). The American Society for Training and Development estimates that by the year 2000, 75% of all employees in the United States

will need retraining (NCAA, 1989). Another projection forecasts that by the year 2000, 86% of all jobs will require post-secondary education or training (NCWW, 1990). If these projections prove accurate, post-secondary education or training, and continuing education must be sought by the secretary because in 1988, only 85% of women in the entire female labor force had even completed four years of high school (NCWW, 1989).

Section 2: Development of Training for Specialized Secretarial Skills

Special college curriculum and training programs have been developed in some areas of secretarial work. Legal assistants receive specialized training in business law, legal procedures, and terminology (Career Information Center, 1990). These legal secretaries/assistants are trained to do some legal research, assist in preparing briefs, and required to be familiar with legal terminology and the format of legal papers (Careers Encyclopedia, 1980). Formal paralegal training programs offer a two-year associate degree program, a four-year degree program, and post-graduate programs. The National Association of Legal Assistants originated a certification exam in 1976 to recognize special expertise (Career Information Center, 1990).

Section 3: Reevaluation and Redesign of Training and Curriculum for Administrative Certification in Education

The purpose of training and retraining is to bring competencies of employees up to desired standards for present or potential job assignments (French, 1987). Government regulations, increased reporting, and rapid technological changes require continuing education in business and industry. Along with all the pressures for change in business and industry, legislative mandates, and an ever-expanding school curriculum compound the need for training and retraining in the field of education.

Because of the increasing complexities in education, the design of pre-training and certification of administrators in the State of Oklahoma is currently being questioned and reevaluated. Redesign of training and curriculum for administrative certification has been recommended by the Cooperative Council of Oklahoma School Administration. Recommended changes in curriculum and training would include emphasis on the following areas:

- ...Decision-Making and Empowerment
- ...Curriculum and Instruction (research, planning, implementation, evaluation)
- ...Climate (influence)
- ...Management

Under these headings, leadership, legal issues, stress management, public relations, human relations, and communication skills are areas stressed (CCOSA, 1990). The rationale for change, along with the recommended changes were sent to selected administrators in Oklahoma. One administrator's written letter of response very strongly agreed with the proposed recommendations, and added the opinion that attention should be given in administrative training to the differences in urban and rural environment, problems, issues, and philosophy (Rundle, personal communication, July 10, 1990).

Section 4: Review of Educational Secretaries Survey

A national survey was conducted of public school secretaries. Those surveyed were secretaries to building principals, and the sampling included every state in the nation. According to the survey, 42% of the school districts they represented would pay for them to attend a training session. However, half of the 504 secretaries surveyed indicated they had not attended a single training session during the past year. The main reason given (34%) for not attending training sessions was the lack of available training. When asked what areas of training they

would like to receive, computer related courses were the most requested. Other areas of training need responses were management, law, office skills, human relations, and time management (Banach, 1988).

The National Association on Education Office Professionals is an organization for educational secretaries. The organization is affiliated with the American Association of School Administrators and the National Association of Elementary School Principals. State and local chapters of NAEOP schedule meetings at which workshops are often part of the agenda. The Oklahoma Association of Educational Office Professionals hold annual fall and spring conferences. At these annual conferences, which are usually only one-day conferences, the attempt is made to cover changes in reporting and new legislation affecting education and reporting. However, no orientation workshops have been held focusing on entry level secretaries. Information obtained from the National Association of Educational Office Professionals indicates that no state adopted programs exist for the training and retraining of educational secretaries. However, many individual public schools, colleges, and universities have encouraged training by offering reimbursement for college courses completed, implementation of workshops, and/or staff

development programs. In 1956, The National Association of Educational Office Professionals developed a certification program for educational secretaries based on years of experience in education, college coursework, workshop attendance, and NAEOP organizational participation. The purpose of the Professional Standards Program is to encourage office personnel to grow professionally (Hoodlebrink, 1989). The state of Delaware, and a number of individual schools, colleges, and universities throughout the nation, recognize NAEOP's Professional Standards Program by adopted salary schedule increases. The only district in the State of Oklahoma reported as recognizing the Professional Standards Program by pay increases is Muskogee.

Summary

Projections indicate the need for specialized training and college coursework in order to remain in the secretarial work force in the future. Increased demands and skills are causing colleges and educational administration to reevaluate curriculum for certification of administrators in the educational field. Available training for educational secretaries, who assist administrators, is a problem nationwide. In order to keep pace with rapidly changing technology, broadening job responsibilities, and increasing

governmental reporting, solutions to the lack of specialized training and retraining for educational secretaries must be developed.

CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF POSSIBLE CAUSES AND OPTION SELECTION

Section 1: Review of Possible Causes

The purpose of this project is to improve training available to educational secretaries with special study and focus on rural schools with student enrollment of 500 or less.

As stated in the literature review, in a survey conducted of 504 educational secretaries to building principals throughout the nation, one-half of those secretaries surveyed had not attended a single training session during the past year. The main reason given for not attending training sessions was the lack of available training, even though 42% reported the school district they represented would pay them to attend a training session. Training need areas listed were computer related courses, management, law, office skills, human relations, and time management (Banach, 1988).

Informal and formal interviews conducted to date on this research project indicate several reasons for lack of attendance at currently existing workshops in the State of Oklahoma.

First, secretarial staff, or their administrators, do not feel they can afford time away from job responsibilities to attend workshops. Secondly, many school districts will not reimburse their secretary for the expenses involved in attending workshops that require travel, meals, and overnight lodging, and the secretary cannot afford the expense. Thirdly, interviews reflect that while secretaries feel there are growing job pressures and responsibilities in their work and they recognize a need for improved and new job skills, there is a lack of incentives such as recognition or salary increases for improvement of their job skills.

Through broad-based surveys and interviews, this research project will focus on verifying the need for improved training for educational secretaries, identifying restraining forces, and seeking solutions for reducing restraining forces, as well as for improving available training.

Section 2: Option Selection

The remaining time span of eight months for this research project will not allow adequate time to develop a design of intervention, implement the intervention, and evaluate the results of the intervention. The literature

review and interviews conducted regarding the development of improved training for educational secretaries indicates some restraining factors exist. Research tools must be developed to identify those restraining forces and added time to develop solutions to reducing the identified restraining forces is necessary, as well as time to conduct research for use in designing alternative solutions for improved training for educational secretaries. Option 1, Applied Action Research, being a change-oriented program which must be actually implemented during the curriculum, is not a feasible choice because of inadequate time available.

Some funding currently exists for the training of educational secretaries through the organization, Oklahoma Association of Educational Office Professionals, and the Oklahoma State Department of Education. Therefore, at this point, there is no indication additional funding will be required to affect positive changes in training. Solutions to the problem may be addressed by making changes and improvements through the above existing sources. Since additional funding needs are not anticipated, Option 2, Grant Proposal, is not best suited for this research project.

Research will be designed to identify possible restraining forces in order to facilitate the implementation

of developed solutions to increase available, improved training for educational secretaries. Careful consideration indicates Option Three, A Policy Decision Paper, is the best suited choice for this research project. The completed project report will be submitted to the Oklahoma Association of Educational Office Professionals and the State Department of Education for implementation consideration.

CHAPTER IV - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction:

No specialized, formal training has been developed for entry level educational secretaries. Update training and workshops for experienced existing educational secretaries are limited and poorly attended. Much of school funding is dependent upon accurate compliance with legal criteria of expanding, complex federal, state, and local programs. Therefore, is specially designed, available training for entry level and existing educational secretaries necessary for satisfactory job performance of their increasing job responsibilities?

The problems involved in training are compounded in rural areas because of distances from colleges and vocational-technical schools, limited skilled workforce, lack of on-site apprenticeship training for entry-level secretaries, and a knowledge base for nearly twice as many job responsibilities as secretarial staff in larger schools. For these reasons, research in this project will focus on educational secretaries in schools of under five hundred student enrollment.

Section 1: Statement of Objectives and Description of Research

Objective 1 of this research project will be to verify a need for specialized and improved training for educational secretaries.

Objective 2 will be to quantify the problem by projecting the number of entry level secretaries needed for the next ten years.

Objective 3 will be to meet the verified needs by developing alternative solutions that will meet approval of administrators as well as their secretaries; thereby, reducing restraining factors for implementation of developed solutions.

Data for this research project will be gathered by use of a purposive, accessible survey administered to educational secretaries and administrators in the rural school setting. Two survey instruments of differing design will be administered. One to educational secretaries and the second to their administrators.

Design of the secretarial survey will request information regarding age and years of experience in order to project numbers of retiring workforce. Closed questions one (age) and two (years of experience) will be used to calculate the number of years before possible retirement,

thereby projecting potential numbers of entry level workforce. Oklahoma teacher retirement members are eligible for retirement when their age plus their years of experience total eighty

A portion of the questionnaire will ask questions to verify the need for development of entry level training for education secretaries and for improved training for existing secretaries. The survey will contain questions to identify restraining forces prohibiting secretaries from participating in professional development training, skill needs assessment, acceptable methods for receiving training, and assessment of job satisfaction.

All questions will be multiple choice or fixed alternative responses except for the last three portions of the survey, which are of open design requesting information on what respondents like most and least about their jobs, concluding with a section for comments.

Question eleven will allow secretarial respondents to rank skill listed areas as very important, important, or unimportant. These will be assessed by using a weighted method.

The administrator's survey will include fixed alternative responses and a question which will allow administrators to indicate their preferences regarding

potential training methods by ranking potential alternative solutions. This section will be calculated by using a weighted method with the numerical ranking supplying the weighted number for total ratings. A section for administrator's comments will conclude their survey.

In order to minimize potential restraining forces and maximize training solution implementation, the second survey will be directed to administrators in education. Without administrative approval, implementation of any developed solutions would be impossible to achieve.

The second survey will request the input of educational administrators in verifying the need for entry level training for educational secretaries and for improved training for existing secretaries. The administrator's survey will include assessment of current training methods, and preferences for alternative methods. Administrators will be asked to rank training method preferences, while secretaries will only be asked to check training methods that, in their opinion, would be most effective. This method will be used for correlation in selecting solution alternatives for training judged effective by secretaries that are most preferred by administrators. The reason for this correlation is that to choose training methods ranked highly by secretaries, but perhaps not by administrators,

could create restraining factors for implementation as administrators control the resources of time away from work and district financial reimbursement or payment of costs involving training. To select training methods judged effective by secretaries and most preferred by administrators could only increase driving forces and reduce restraining forces for implementation.

Some of the solutions developed in other states have been to encourage and support professional development of educational secretaries by reimbursing them for fees for workshops and course work completed satisfactorily. Some districts have implemented staff development programs. One state and many individual districts throughout the nation have adopted salary schedules with pay increases for continued education and training as incentives for professional development.

A solution to specialized training for legal secretaries has been the development of college curriculum with associate and bachelor's degrees being offered. The development of an associate degree program for educational secretaries will be investigated as a possible solution should survey data indicate that method of training is a desirable solution.

A block diagram will be used to illustrate the following:

1. projected numbers of retiring existing workforce.
2. who provided job training for existing workforce.
3. who would be responsible for providing job training for entry level secretaries with footnote of expected ease of implementation of that method.
4. distance to nearest in-state college or vocational technical school

A pie chart will be used to identify skills needed for the job responsibilities of an educational secretary. Ratings for potential training methods for both entry level and existing secretarial staff will be compared by use of a block diagram. Percentage rankings will be used to list job likes and dislikes.

Field Test:

After the questionnaires were developed a field test was conducted at the Organization of Rural Oklahoma Schools' (OROS) Fall Conference on October 12, 1990. A brief oral presentation explaining the research project and the potential uses for the resulting data was given to a group of 30 administrators of rural schools having enrollment of under five hundred students.

Following the oral presentation, the administrators were asked to complete, evaluate, and return the survey requesting administrative input, and to hand-carry the secretarial survey to their secretary with the same instructions. Administrators were told that data results compiled from this project would be forwarded to the Organization of Rural Oklahoma Schools, the Oklahoma State Department of Education, and the Oklahoma Association of Educational Office Professionals.

At the conclusion of the presentation, numerous verbal comments were made by the administrators expressing appreciation for attempting to develop solutions for a growing problem they had long felt needed researching. The participants who reviewed the questionnaire at the conference indicated that the questions on the questionnaires were concise, easily understood, and well formed to meet the objectives of the research project.

CHAPTER V
RESULTS AND ALTERNATIVES

Introduction:

Following the field test, in which twenty-five of thirty surveys were returned, fifty additional surveys were mailed. Cover letters explaining the project and stating where results of the survey could be obtained upon completion were attached to all questionnaires distributed. Total surveys distributed numbered one hundred sixty; eighty to secretaries and eighty to administrators. The respondents for the mailed surveys were a sampling selected at random from the mailing list of the Organization of Rural Oklahoma Schools. From this mailing of fifty questionnaires, twenty-eight secretarial surveys and twenty-seven administrative surveys were completed and returned. Total distribution and return were as follows:

Table 1

<u>Administrative Survey</u>	<u>Secretarial Survey</u>
52 completed and returned ...	53
<u>28</u> no response	<u>27</u>
80 distributed	80

This response was considered adequate for data completion and no further surveys were distributed. It was interesting to note that the return of those surveys accompanied by an oral presentation produced a response of eighty-three percent, while the mailed surveys only produced a return of fifty-five percent.

Statement of Purpose:

The purpose of this project was to develop training for educational secretaries with special attention to unique problems in rural schools of under five hundred student enrollment.

Section 1: Results of Data Collection - Secretarial Survey

Verification of Need

Fixed alternative responses were requested on Questions Four, Five, and Six. When asked if their job responsibilities had increased in the last five years, 100% responded that they had. A need for specialized training/orientation methods for entry level secretaries was envisioned by 98.11% of those surveyed, and it was the opinion of 100% that training/information methods for existing secretarial staff could be improved. Questions Four and Five, regarding need for training, were also asked on the administrative survey. The combined responses to the secretarial and administrator's surveys on these two

questions are illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 below. This response verified need to develop entry-level training and to improve information and training methods for existing secretarial staff.

Figure 1

Need Verification For Special Training/Orientation for Entry Level

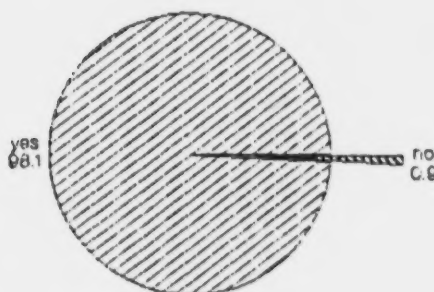
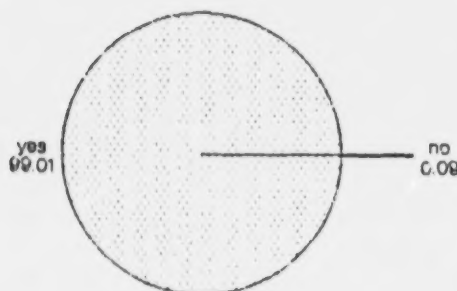


Figure 2

Need Verification for Improved Training/Information Methods For Existing Staff



Education

Research Question Three indicated that 100% of those secretaries surveyed received a high school education, 13.21% had attended a junior college or vocational-technical school, 11.32% had attended a business school, and 37.74% had attended a four-year college. Of the entire group surveyed, 15.09% had attended college four years, 0% for three years, 5.66% for two years, and 16.98% for one year. This indicates that a significant number of the workforce could have received specialized coursework while attending college or vocational-technical schools.

Entry Level Projections

The first two questions of the secretarial survey, which requested the age and years of experience of the respondent, were used to project retiring workforce for the future. Since members of the educational retirement plan in Oklahoma are eligible for retirement when their age added to their years of experience in education in Oklahoma equals eighty, Question One (years of experience) and Question Two (age) were added together and subtracted from eighty to project the number of years before the respondent would be eligible for retirement. This figure was then entered and compiled on the computer spread sheet as Item #3. A grouped frequency was used to record ages, years of

experience, and projected years until retirement, which is illustrated in Tables 2, 3, and Figure 3.

Table 2

Years of ExperienceClass Interval Cumulative Frequency Percentages of Total

0 - 4 years	14	26.42
5 - 9	12	22.64
10 - 14	13	24.53
15 - 20	7	13.21
over 20	6	11.32
no response		<u>1.88</u>
		100.00

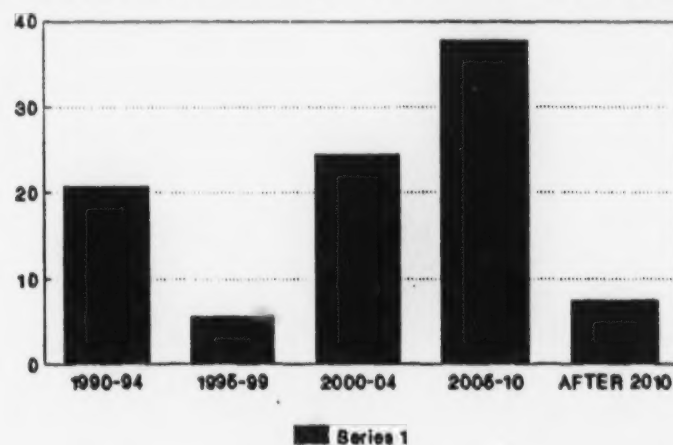
Table 3

AgeClass Interval Cumulative Frequency Percentages of Total

under 30	0	0.00
30 - 34	5	9.43
35 - 39	16	30.19
40 - 44	12	22.64
45 - 49	8	15.09
50 - 55	7	13.21
over 55	4	7.55
no response		<u>1.89</u>
		100.00

Figure 3

Projected Entry Level Workforce



Of the workforce surveyed, over one-fourth had under five years of experience, with the largest portion of that workforce (30.19%) between the ages of 35 to 39.

Figure 3 projects what percentage of the total workforce will be comprised of entry level secretaries for different time periods to the year 2010. Applied projections show that one-fifth of the workforce will be eligible for retirement in under five years, with the largest percent (37.74%) retiring in 15 to 20 years, between 2005 and 2010. If current secretarial staff remain in their existing positions, the greatest need for effective entry-level training will be from the year 2000 to 2010 when 62.27% of the entire workforce will be eligible for retirement.

Identification of Restraining Factors for Professional Development Participation

In Question Seven, the number of workshops or courses that the respondents had attended during the past year was requested, with 30.19% indicating they had attended no workshops, and 30.19% indicating they had attended one workshop. The reason for lack of attendance was asked in multiple choice Question Eight with the results illustrated in Table 4. Time constraints and lack of availability were expected to be the reasons most often cited by respondents

for lack of attendance. Respondents were asked to list other reasons for nonattendance, and all 11.3% indicated lack of awareness of workshops currently being offered. This indicates that an information network could increase attendance. Time constraints and lack of availability were expected to be the most frequent reasons for lack of participation.

Table 4

Reasons for Nonparticipation in Professional Development

Time constraints.....	64.15%
Lack of available workshops....	43.40%
Lack of awareness.....	11.32%
Personal expense.....	7.55%
District expense.....	1.89%
Not interested.....	1.89%

A method for providing available workshops will be explored as a solution. No research question was formulated to discover whether workshops held on Saturdays would reduce the restraining factor of time constraints.

In Question Nine, another multiple choice was given to supply information regarding whether the district of the respondent encouraged professional development by providing

release time and paying expenses to attend professional development workshops. The results demonstrated local district support for attendance. The districts of 79.25% of those surveyed were willing to pay all expenses, with 62.26% providing release time from work. The time constraint factor may indicate that professional development participation could be increased by holding Saturday workshops if secretarial staff were willing to attend on their time.

Those surveyed were asked to rate their answers on a scale from Very Important to Unimportant when asked how important they felt it was for them to be involved in the planning of their professional development (Table 5). Results show that it would seem advantageous to develop participation of secretarial input in the planning of professional development methods and training.

Table 5

Importance of Participative Input into Professional Development

Very Important.....58.49%

Important.....39.62%

Unimportant....0.0%

N = 52

98.11% Reported

Existing Entry Level Training Responsibility

Multiple-choice Questions 12 and 13 were asked to obtain information on who had provided job training for the respondent and who, in her opinion, would provide training for her replacement in the event she left her present position. Information indicated that most had received training from the exiting secretary and/or the administrator by which they were employed. No training was provided for 18.87% of the respondents.

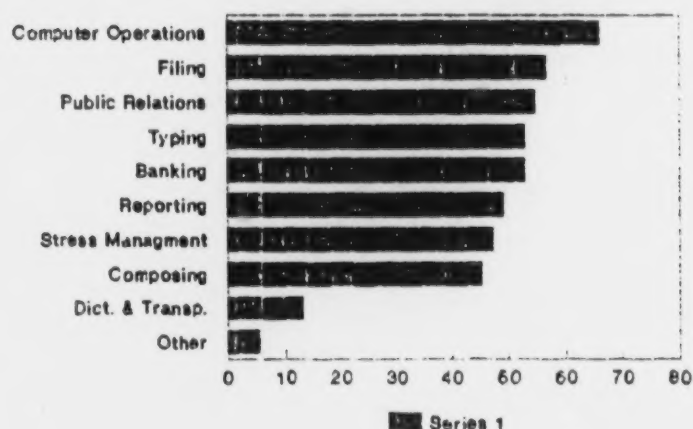
Over seventy-nine percent of the respondents signified that replacement training for their position would be their responsibility if they were available, and 33.96% indicated the administrator would provide necessary training. In the correlated survey distributed to administrators, findings showed that only 5 out of 52 administrators would prefer training be provided by themselves or the exiting secretary. The fixed alternative response of Question 14 reflected that 81.13% of the secretarial respondents felt that adequate entry level training by staff within the district would be difficult and time consuming, with some respondents adding the comment it would take months to accomplish. In many cases the exiting secretary would not be able to stay on site to provide lengthy apprenticeship training.

Skills Assessment

Rankings of Very Important, Important, or Unimportant were requested on ten job-related skill areas. Figure 4 illustrates that computer operations were the most highly rated skill, with dictation and transcribing skills being rated the lowest.

Figure 4

Skills Rated As Very Important



While the traditional skills of typing and filing were rated as important, it was confirmed that new skills are needed such as computer operations, public relations, and

needed such as computer operations, public relations, and stress management. Surveys are currently being distributed among administrators statewide, reassessing skills needed for administration in education. These surveys list new skills including resource, stress and conflict management, as well as human and public relation skills.

Proposed Solution Effectiveness Assessment

Accessibility to a college or vocational-technical school was determined by fixed alternative response to Question 15. Those surveyed were asked if they would have to drive over thirty minutes to attend an in-state college or vocational-technical school, and 52.83% responded that they would.

Opinions of effective alternative methods for training were gathered by use of a multiple choice listing of potential solutions to entry level and continued training. Those selected as effective methods are illustrated by ranking in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 6

Ranking of Effective Training Solutions for Entry Level

1. Educational secretarial handbook
 2. Workshops
 3. Seminars
 4. Taped workshops
 5. Clinics
 6. Associate college degree
 7. Formal college courses
-

Table 7

Ranking of Effective Update Training for Experienced Level

1. Educational secretarial handbook
 2. Workshops
 3. Seminars
 4. Taped workshops
 5. Associate college degree
 6. Clinics
 7. Formal college courses
-

Job Satisfaction and Comments

Open questions were asked of respondents regarding what they liked most and least about their job in Question 17 and 18. Those surveyed indicated they enjoyed working with faculty and students, and the variety in their job responsibilities. Many indicted summers at home were an advantage of their job.

The high degree of responsibility, stress, extra duties, salary, telephone interruptions, reporting, and lack of professional recognition and training were the most often mentioned reasons for job dissatisfaction. In 1988, the job of secretary was ranked as tenth of a list of the most stressful jobs, with a high school teacher being the most stressful of all jobs. Those working in an educational setting are facing daily stressors that rank with occupations such as police officer, miner, air-traffic controller, medical intern, and customer complaint workers.

The responses under "comments" tended to deal with the stress of handling so many job responsibilities, combined with the lack of adequate training for those responsibilities. Some of the comments were the following:

"Feel secretaries should be recognized as professionals"....."Secretaries should receive increments for experience."....."No available

entry training"....."So many job responsibilities!"
....."There is more responsibility for educational secretaries than any other secretarial job I have ever had due to so many areas of job responsibilities."....."I think there has been a very big change in the technical aspect of my job in the last fourteen years, and specialized training for entry level and experienced secretaries will be necessary in the very near future."

Results of Administrative Survey

Question 1 requested the administrative title of the respondent since thirty of these surveys were distributed at the Fall OROS Conference and a few of the members of that organization are not in public school administration. Two surveys of the thirty were eliminated because they were not completed by an administrator in public education.

Verification of Need

Fixed alternative responses of yes or no were required of administrators on Questions 2 and 3. In response to both these questions, only one administrator out of the fifty-two surveyed felt there was no need for specialized training\orientation for entry level educational secretaries

or to improve training\information methods for existing staff. This resulted in an affirmative need verification of 98.1%. Figure 2 illustrates the combined responses of administrators and secretaries on these two identically worded survey questions.

Training Responsibility Preference

In Question 4 administrators were asked to indicate whether they preferred entry level training for new secretarial staff to be accomplished internally at the local level within their school or by training methods developed externally through the State Department of Education, post-secondary curriculum, or the professional organization for educational secretaries. Forty-seven (90.4%) of the administrators preferred training to be developed and provided by external sources. This confirmed verbal interviews conducted with administrators prior to this research project in which they expressed they did not have the time necessary to train new secretarial personnel and/or lacked the information base needed in certain job functions to do so.

Training Solution Preferences

Administrators were given five solutions to provide training for educational secretaries and were asked to rank them in the order of their preferences, one being the most

preferred. A weighted method of the one through five ranking was used to evaluate responses, with the lowest numerical total being the most popular preference and the highest numerical total being the least popular solution. Their preferences were the following as shown in Table 8.

Table 8

1. Specialized training workshops, clinics
 2. Secretarial handbook
 3. Workshops available on video tape by job function
 4. Two-year associate degree for educational secretaries
 5. College courses
-

Solutions one through four shown above in Table 8 were also the four methods judged as most effective by secretaries surveyed. Training through college coursework was judged the least preferred and effective by both groups, even though it was noted on the survey that the possibility existed to develop college coursework made available by telecommunications not requiring attendance on campus.

Section 2: Alternative Actions and Their Feasibility
Secretarial Handbook

A handbook for educational secretaries was rated as the most effective solution by secretaries and second ranked preference of administrators. This handbook could be used as a reference tool especially beneficial to new staff, containing information on job related activities, procedures, and responsibilities. A listing of reports, due dates, and length of time legally required to retain those reports on file would also be helpful. Assistance and information access for specific areas of reporting and job functions could be facilitated by the handbook including a departmental listing of the names and phone numbers of contact people in the State Department of Education.

While educational secretaries should participate in the development of the handbook, the restraining forces of time constraints and funding for such a project would be difficult to overcome. The driving force behind development of such a handbook would be its benefit to educational secretarial staff statewide. Because it would benefit schools statewide, it would seem logical for the handbook to be an undertaking of the State Department of Education personnel, along with selected educational secretaries serving on an advisory committee. This project would seem

to be feasible since handbooks for related job areas have been published by the State Department of Education in past years.

An administrative handbook was developed and distributed by the Oklahoma State Department of Education in 1981. Many administrators have expressed the handbook has served as a helpful tool, especially to inexperienced administrators, even though some of the information has become outdated.

In an informal survey conducted by the researcher at the OAEOP Spring Conference in 1990, results showed that secretarial duties in schools of under five hundred student enrollment were nearly double those of secretaries in larger schools. Approximately one-fourth of the secretaries in those schools also served as district treasurer. The State Department of Education published a handbook for school district treasurers in 1983; however, much of the information contained in that reference manual has become outdated.

Workshops, Clinics, Seminars

The solution ranked second in effectiveness by secretarial respondents and the most popular preference of administrators responding to the survey was to provide training by workshops, clinics, and seminars.

Some workshops are currently being provided through the State Department of Education in areas of reporting requiring dramatic changes. These are usually three to four hour workshops held in Oklahoma City during the middle of the working week. Travel to Oklahoma City from the extreme eastern and western portions require as long as twelve hours of travel time. Time away from home and work is a restraining factor.

Limited informational workshops are offered twice a year through the Oklahoma Association of Educational Office Professionals. In the past, this organization has been urged by members to keep registration costs for workshops as low as possible because members felt that if registration fees and travel expenses for attending those workshops and professional meetings were too costly, their districts would not allow them to attend. Many secretaries have indicated that being absent from work imposes a hardship of their administrator, providing enough of a restraining factor that many administrators discouraged workshop attendance. However, the survey indicated that total expenses of 79.25% of the secretaries surveyed were paid by their district and 62.26% were provided work release time to attend. At OAEOP meetings when the feasibility of holding workshops on Saturdays has been discussed, many secretaries have stated

they are reluctant to give up Saturdays to attend, with many expressing dissatisfaction with extra job related hours already being spent with no extra pay. Perhaps further investigation and research needs to be conducted to identify the most preferred days to hold future workshops.

At the last OAEOP conference in October, a guest speaker from the National Association of Educational Office Professionals was acquired at no cost to our state organization. That speaker conducts workshops and seminars nationwide and stated the registration fees our state organization was charging were lower than any state conference she had attended throughout the United States for a number of years. She made the suggestion that our organization increase registration fees to provide the financial resources to improve workshop offerings. As financial resources have been a restraining factor in being able to provide a variety of quality workshop offerings, increased registration fees could benefit the upgrading of existing workshops.

Under "other" reasons for not participating in professional development by attending workshops, 11.32% of the respondents stated they were unaware of existing workshops being held. Therefore, it would seem some means for improved networking needs to be developed. Field

service to enlarge membership to the state educational secretarial organization would be one method to improve awareness of professional development options.

The feasibility of a pilot project for developing a summer seminar for entry level secretarial staff is an option worthy of researching. Sponsorship of such a seminar could possibly be an undertaking achieved by the cooperative efforts of the State Department of Education, a college, and the professional educational secretaries organization (OAEOP). Most colleges are currently making extensive efforts to utilize fully their campuses and faculty year round. College Adult and Continuing Education Departments coordinate short-term conferences and workshops and could be utilized to offer such a seminar.

Taped Workshops

The alternative solution ranked as third preference by administrators and third most effective by secretaries was taped workshops. If workshops by job function could be produced and made available on video tape, districts could have access to on-site training. Since the first and second reasons secretaries gave for not participating in professional development by attending workshops were time constraints and lack of availability, video tapes could provide a means of providing training on a variety of job

functions, not only without having to travel, but viewed when it is convenient.

The University of Oklahoma has expressed an interest in funding and conducting a pilot project for taped workshops. It is the opinion of the researcher that even though this alternative solution of taped workshop offerings was only rated third, it appears to be the best method to choose for development in order to eliminate the top two restraining forces for professional development and training.

Associate Degree and College Courses

The alternatives judged the lowest in effectiveness by secretarial staff and desirability by administrators were the development of an associate degree and/or college courses specifically designed for educational secretaries, even though the survey stated the possibility existed to offer this option through telecommunications.

The researcher investigated the feasibility of the offering of course work by telecourse or telenet. It was found that Rose State Junior College in Oklahoma City, in cooperation with the Department of Libraries, offers an applied science associate degree program for library technical assistants. This associate degree was offered at 80 telenet locations throughout the state of Oklahoma. The program had 155 students enrolled in that program the first

semester it was offered. A grant paid for tuition and books the first semester. When the grant ended the second semester, the enrollment dropped to 30 students. The Department of Libraries recognized this degree by salary increases for those completing their associate degrees. Other telenet associate degrees recently developed by Rose State Junior College are in the areas of computer graphics, postal work, and child care center management.

Interviews with Dr. Britton, head of learning resources and developer of these projects, and Dr. Larry Nutter, college president, were conducted. This researcher found that the flow chart for development of degree offerings usually originates by a college advisory committee, comprised of people from the community and business sector, identifying a need for curriculum in some area. Their recommendation then goes to a division curriculum committee and then is submitted to the coordinator of education.

CHAPTER VI

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction:

Previous chapters stated that the purpose of this project was to verify or reject the theory that a need exists to develop entry-level training and to improve continued training for educational secretaries. The project also sought to identify needed skills for training in that profession. Another objective of this project was to evaluate the effectiveness and desirability of potential solutions to developing and improving training.

Section 1: Conclusions:

Verification of Need

Results of this study clearly indicate expanding job responsibilities for educational secretaries. Results of this study showed a 98.11% verified need for development of entry-level training and a 100% verified need for improved continuing training for educational secretaries. This verification was gathered from administrators and secretaries in the field of education who were located in rural schools with student enrollments of under 500 students.

Scope of Need

This project also sought to develop entry-level projections for the future to identify how many would be confronting the identified problem and when the problem of entry-level training would become most critical. The projections indicated that entry-level training will be needed for 62.27% of the entire workforce between the years 2000 to 2010. If these projections are applied to the total number of educational secretaries employed in the State of Oklahoma in the 1989 fiscal year (4,347), it can be estimated that 2,707 educational secretaries will require specialized entry-level training during that ten-year period.

Skills Requiring Training

This study identified skill areas for training that would incorporate state and federal laws and reporting requirements and procedures pertaining to the field of education. While the traditional secretarial skills of typing and filing were among those skills identified as needed, it was confirmed that skills such as computer operations, public relations, stress management, and banking were also needed along with a knowledge of the specialized reporting required in education.

Responsibility for Training

In the past, entry-level training has been the responsibility of those at individual school sites and been accomplished mainly by apprenticeship methods. However, this study revealed that 90.4% of administration no longer feel that past methods are feasible and indicated the need for specialized entry-level training to be developed and provided by a source external of local school site apprenticeship. Since no specialized entry-level training for educational secretaries has been developed to date, the need exists for some entity to assume responsibility for solution development and implementation of such specialized training. Because the job position of educational secretaries is neither a state certified nor classified position, the State Department of Education has not developed any training criteria, nor have any educational sources been created to prepare personnel for the job category.

Section 2 - Force Field Analysis:

Overall, this project reflected that the major restraining forces to utilizing the limited existing workshops for educational secretaries were time constraints (64.15%) and a lack of availability (43.4%), with 60.4% of

existing secretarial personnel indicating they had attended only one or no workshops during the past year. It may be assumed that the same restraining forces would exist for entry-level personnel. The majority of the school job sites in Oklahoma are located in rural areas and by targeting that rural populace for this research survey, it was found that 52.83% of those schools are not located in areas where they have accessibility to colleges or vocational-technical schools to obtain even generalized secretarial skills for personnel. Research indicates that job responsibilities of the rural school secretary are nearly double that secretaries in large school systems. These job responsibilities require a broad-base of knowledge, information updating, and skills for which their geographic location itself is a restraining factor.

Another identified potential restraining factor for attracting skilled personnel and continuing professional development for existing personnel was low salaries with no adopted pay scales with increments for either experience or continuing professional development/training. While some states have developed some form of training criteria for professional development, along with adopted salary schedules as incentives for pursuing training and

experience, Oklahoma and most other states have not yet done so.

The 1988-89 personnel reports for noncertified educational staff in the State of Oklahoma indicated the average salary of the 3,929 school secretaries employed that year was \$11,848.00, with the average salary for 418 administrative assistants being \$18,921.00. Neither of these positions are certified or classified and no clear job description or criteria has been established for either position.

The restraining force of lack of available workshops can be attributed to no central assignment of responsibility for that task. While the State Department of Education does hold limited workshops necessary to implement changes in legal requirements and mandates in reporting, other areas of verified skill needs are not met. Knowledge in computer operations, public relations, and banking with focus on application for the school setting remain nonexistent or limited to short workshop presentations at the biannual conference for educational secretaries held by the Oklahoma Association of Educational Office Professionals. Low membership and a shortage of funds greatly limit that organization's ability to reach personnel and fulfill a broad base of needs in one-day meetings twice a year.

Two sectors are capable of providing the driving or restraining force necessary for the implementation of any developed solutions to succeed or fail: secretaries and administrators. The verification that public school administrators and secretaries surveyed have nearly unanimously verified a need for development of entry-level and improved training for educational secretaries constitutes a driving force for development of solutions. Attempts to implement solutions that were undesirable to either sector would create a major restraining force. Therefore, their solution preferences were given major consideration in the researcher's formation of solution recommendations. Fortunately, the preferences of administration concurred with the solutions judged most effective by educational secretaries surveyed, and those solutions were the following:

1. Handbook for educational secretaries
2. Workshops
3. Seminars
4. Taped workshops

While other solutions involved college coursework and development of associate degrees for educational secretaries, those solutions have been dismissed for

consideration due to low rankings by both administrators and educational secretaries.

A driving force force for assuming responsibility for meeting the verified need for developing entry-level training and improving professional development for existing educational secretaries is the Oklahoma State Department of Education. The purpose and objective of the State Department of Education is to develop solutions for meeting needs in the field of education and to aid in the implementation of those solutions. A statewide need has been identified and verified. The State Department of Education verbally approved this study, requested the results of its findings, and data results have been submitted. Their direction can provide the leadership for implementing changes to meet identified needs.

Section 3: Policy Recommendations

Secretarial Handbook

After analysis of the results of the data collected from this research project, it is the recommendation of the researcher that a handbook for educational secretaries be developed by State Department of Education personnel, assisted by an advisory committee of experienced educational secretaries. This handbook would be used as a reference

tool and contain information on job related activities, laws, procedures, and responsibilities. The contents would also include a listing of reports, due dates, and the length of time the reports are legally required to be retained on file. Also included in the handbook would be a departmental listing of the names and phone numbers of contact people in the State Department of Education for obtaining additional assistance. The State Department of Education could mail out annual updates for the handbook as changes were made.

Workshops and Seminars

In addition to a handbook for educational secretaries, it is the recommendation of the researcher that two-to-five day specialized entry-level training seminars be developed to be held during the summer on a centralized college campus or vocational-technical school. These seminars would be developed by State Department of Education personnel, assisted by an advisory council of educational secretaries. The seminars would focus on orientation to school laws and reporting procedures and would contain workshops relating to job responsibilities and public relations. To manage time and human resources efficiently, the researcher recommends that upon development of effective training sessions for specific job functions such as activity fund, lunch fund, federal reporting, public relations, etc., these

presentations be videotaped to form a library. These tapes could be made available for future seminars, local on-site viewing for entry-level personnel, staff development, and local training for specific job functions.

To address the need for improved continuing training for educational secretaries the researcher recommends annual presentations to provide updates on law and reporting changes. These presentations could be conducted at a centrally located geographic location or broadcast at numerous telecommunication sites throughout the state. These presentations would be videotaped so those who were unable to attend could have access to tapes for local viewing. This method would reduce or eliminate travel time.

The researcher also recommends that the state organization for educational secretaries (OAEOP) develop a means of promoting membership by providing field service and/or enlisting the support of the State Department of Education to increase awareness statewide that the organization exists and provides a means for continuing professional development.

Section 4: Recommendations for Further Research

Effective leadership involves vision. Research can assist human vision in identifying problem areas, their sources, and their solutions. Vision includes the ability to anticipate the future and to develop plans for avoiding potential problems. For this reason, ongoing research is imperative to effective planning and management. The increasing bureaucracy of reporting involved in the accountability of expanding responsibilities in the field of education mandates that education incorporate effective management theories to maximize efficiency and reduce expenditures.

The largest identified restraining force for participation in professional development for educational secretaries was time constraints. Also, the responses given under the comment section reflected a stress factor of inadequate time to give thorough attention to the accurate completion of the rapidly increasing job responsibilities and paperwork. Responses also indicated that the lack of adequate training, as well as low pay for accountability of numerous job responsibilities for which no training was available, was also a stress factor for educational secretaries. Research in this project did reflect seemingly low average salaries among educational

seemingly low average salaries among educational secretaries.

The researcher recommends that further research be conducted in three areas relating to educational secretaries.

First, the researcher recommends research be conducted to examine salaries and the criteria used in establishing those salaries. Also, recommended is research as to what objectives have led to some states adopting salary schedules that include pay increments for experience and state established training criteria and how effective those states feel these objectives have been met by these changes.

Secondly, the researcher recommends that research be conducted among educational secretaries to gather input on potential changes for more efficient time management. It is the opinion of the researcher that duplicity in reporting is one area that improvements could be identified. Possibly a statewide on-line computer network for reporting and correspondence would be more efficient time management. A cost/benefit analysis study could reflect an overall reduction in expenditure projections for human resources and postage statewide for school districts as well as for the State Department of Education by implementing such a system.

Thirdly, the researcher would recommend that should solutions be implemented in regard to developing and improving training for educational secretaries, that a follow-up study be conducted for evaluation. The evaluation would be designed to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented solutions and to gain input or further improvements.

CHAPTER VII - REFLECTIONS

My experiences as an educational secretary for twenty-seven years suggested this project for research. For several years I have envisioned that such a research project could provide solutions for a growing problem for administration in rural areas in the training of new secretarial personnel. While I have had many years to acquire learning and skills required of increased job responsibilities, I realize what a stressful situation it would create to expect a replacement to master the same knowledge in a short period with no developed plan for training and orientation.

There was a dual sense of motivation and accomplishment in conducting this research project. One was derived from fulfilling requirements to complete my degree. The second was through service to a profession that has been my lifetime career.

This was a unique project since prior research regarding educational secretaries was extremely limited, with no prior research ever located on developing entry-level training. At the Annual Conference for the National Association of Educational Office Professionals in Denver last July, verbal contact with educational secretaries

throughout the United States and several other countries indicated that the need for developing entry-level training is becoming an increasingly recognized problem. Perhaps this research project will be of some benefit to others in developing solutions to the problem.

In a survey I conducted one year before beginning this research project, data indicated the job responsibilities of the rural secretary were nearly double that of secretaries in large school systems. Serving as school district treasurer was found to be an added job responsibility for over 25% of the secretaries in rural schools. The cash management of public funds involves a high degree to accountability, as well as responsibility. As in other job responsibilities of the educational secretary, no criteria or certification has been established for the position of school district treasurer. I recently learned there is a plan to introduce legislation that would establish certain training criteria for school district treasurers. It would seem that the need for specialized training has been recognized for at least one area of job responsibilities, perhaps others will follow.

In my reflection on the overall objectives of this research project, I am struck by the ironic paradox that in an institution such as schools where we stress the value of

education as the key to success on the job, we neglect the training and education of one of the most vital and important sectors, the secretaries. It would seem that if we are to take our reasoning about the value of education to the farthest, we must include these key people in staff development programs. Otherwise, there is a double standard: training and education is a must for one group, it is unnecessary for another. If we examine the facts presented in this paper, we can see that education is an essential part of the overall educational program of a district.

Careful thought and planning went into the design of the data collection instruments, which were two separate surveys. Two sectors were determined to be the major driving or restraining forces for development and successful implementation of solutions: educational secretaries and administrators. For this reason, two surveys of differing design were formed. I felt the problem not only needed to be verified, but quantified as well. Quantifying the problem for years to come will aid in planning for critical time periods. Data collected confirmed what I theorized to be true; that being a large turnover around the year 2000 due to retirement. Data verifying the problem indicated

that training problems were much more widely recognized than I anticipated.

Upon completion of the survey tool for data collection, I gave a great deal of thought to introduction of this survey to the two sectors to be surveyed. I am very aware of the existing negative attitudes in education toward the reporting, paperwork, and survey demands being placed upon the targeted populace for my survey. I felt it was important to communicate how this project could benefit them and make their jobs easier, as well as to dispel any fears of "hidden agendas" attached to the project.

Fortunately, I was able to do this by being invited to speak at the Fall Conference for the Organization of Rural Oklahoma Schools, which is an organization for administrators of school districts with enrollments of under 500 students. My oral presentation was followed by a question and answer session, after which surveys were distributed for the pilot study of the survey. The pilot study survey yielded a 83% response rate, which is an exceptionally high response rate for a survey. The surveys mailed to respondents with a cover letter of introduction yielded only a response rate of 55%. I learned that a clear understanding of the objectives of a research study, how it will benefit the targeted populace, along with personal contact with the researcher,

can not only yield a much higher response rate, but gain support for your project as well. Many administrators at that conference came to me after my presentation to thank me for attacking a problem they, too, had recognized, but not known how to resolve. Through this experience, I learned how careful planning can coordinate interrelated systems into united teams.

My attitude for twenty-seven years has been to try to make administrator's jobs easier and reduce their workload. This attitude was reflected in the survey I designed for administrators, with their survey only containing four questions and the secretarial containing eighteen questions. The administrative survey only contained questions to verify the problem, evaluate solutions, and assign responsibility for implementation of solutions. In retrospect, I feel it would have been highly beneficial to include a skills assessment section in the administrative survey. Administrators are most definitely in a position to make valid evaluations regarding what skills are most important for secretaries who assist them in administration.

This project has provided me with insight into requirements for formal research and caused me to think with vision. As students in the HRM Program, we have learned that vision is an important ingredient in successful

leadership and management. Vision regarding the internal, as well as external, environment enables leadership to provide direction that reduces conflict, stress, and failure, and increases success. I have learned that visionary thinking is not always an inborn trait, but it can be developed. One of the main concepts of learning in this research project assignment has been visionary thinking. The design of research forces students to develop the ability to evaluate, project, and plan for the future.

This project has also provided me with insight as to the worth of truly believing in the value of your work. Belief in the worth and validity of the topic for my research topic made the assignment an exciting challenge, rather than a task to be completed. I have learned that truly believing you are providing a worthy service that will benefit others can provide the motivation and driving force for success. I would hope to apply this learning to any future job I might seek.

The cooperation and support I have received for this project have made it a positive experience. Service to education was the attitude I encountered in contacts with the State Department of Education, survey respondents, personal interviews, and our instructors in the HRM Program. I greatly appreciate their assistance and support.

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APPENDIX A
SECRETARIAL SURVEY

EDUCATIONAL SECRETARY SURVEY

1. Your total years experience as educational secretary in Oklahoma: _____
2. Age: _____
3. Education:
 - _____ a) High School
 - _____ b) Junior or Technical College
 - _____ c) Business School
 - _____ d) 4-Yr. CollegeCompleted years...1.....2....3....4 (circle)
4. Have your job responsibilities increased in the last five years? _____ yes _____ no
5. Do you envision a need for specialized training/orientation for entry level educational secretaries? _____ yes _____ no
6. Do you feel training/information methods can be improved for existing secretarial staff? _____ yes _____ no
7. How many training workshops or courses have you attended during the last (1989-90) school year? _____
8. Reasons for not participating in professional development (workshops, seminars, courses, etc.)
 - _____ a) lack of availability
 - _____ b) personal expense
 - _____ c) district expense
 - _____ d) time constraints (workload, time away from work)
 - _____ e) not interested
 - _____ f) other (please list) _____
9. Does your school district encourage professional development by
 - _____ a) paying tuition and/or registration fees
 - _____ b) paying your total expenses (room, mileage, meals)
 - _____ c) providing work release time
10. How important do you feel it is for you to be involved in the planning of your professional development?
Very important_____ Important_____ Unimportant_____

11. What training skills are most important for your job responsibilities?

Please rate the below areas as...

1)Very Important 2)Important 3)Unimportant

- ☐ a) computer operations
- ☐ b) school law
- ☐ c) reporting (laws & procedures)
- ☐ d) typing
- ☐ e) filing
- ☐ f) banking procedures (including investments)
- ☐ g) composing letters, memos, etc.
- ☐ h) stress management
- ☐ i) public and human relations
- ☐ j) dictation and transcribing
- ☐ k) others (please list) _____

12. Who provided job orientation/training for you in your present position?

- ☐ a) administrator
- ☐ b) another secretary on staff
- ☐ c) exiting secretary
- ☐ d) other (please list) _____
- ☐ e) none received

13. Who do you feel would provide job orientation/training should you leave your present position?

- ☐ a) administrator
- ☐ b) another secretary on staff
- ☐ c) you, if available...time required _____
- ☐ d) none would be provided

14. Do you feel the above would be difficult and time consuming? ☐ yes ☐ no

15. Would you have to commute over 30 minutes to an in-state college or vocational-technical school? ☐ yes ☐ no

16. How do you feel training needs would most effectively be met?

Entry Level Training

Experienced Level Training

- | | | |
|----------|-----------------------------------|----------|
| _____ a) | *formal college courses | a) _____ |
| _____ b) | *associate college degree (2 yr.) | b) _____ |
| _____ c) | workshops (1 day) | c) _____ |
| _____ d) | seminars (2-3 day) | d) _____ |
| _____ e) | clinics (on campus in summer) | e) _____ |
| _____ f) | educational secretary handbook | f) _____ |
| _____ g) | taped workshops by job function | g) _____ |

*The possibility exists for these to be developed and offered by a telenet location, or by telecourse (college courses via taped lectures or tapes, not requiring campus attendance.)

17. Please list what you like most about your job (1 as most liked).

- 1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

18. Please list what you like least about your job (1 as least liked).

- 1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

Comments: _____

Thank you for your input. Please return this questionnaire to the address below by October 15, 1990, if possible. Data results will be submitted to OROS, OAEOP, and the State Department of Education.

VICKI FRY
FORGAN SCHOOL
BOX 406
FORGAN, OK 73938

APPENDIX B
ADMINISTRATIVE SURVEY

ADMINISTRATOR'S SURVEY:
TRAINING NEEDS OF THE EDUCATIONAL SECRETARY

1. Administrative title _____
2. Do you envision a need for specialized training/orientation for entry level educational secretaries? yes___ no___
3. Do you feel training/information methods can be improved for existing secretarial staff? yes ___ no___
4. Regarding training/orientation for entry level educational secretaries, please indicate your preference:
 - ___ a) Training to be accomplished exclusively at the local level by administration or existing staff.
 - ___ b) Prefer specialized training be developed by State Department of Education, professional organization, or post-secondary curriculum
5. How do you feel entry training needs would best be met? (Rank in order of preference, 1 being most preferred.)
 - * ___ a) college courses
 - * ___ b) 2 yr. associate degree designed for educational secretaries
 - ___ c) specialized training workshops, clinics, etc
 - ___ d) above available on video tape by job function
 - ___ e) secretarial handbook (similar to adm. handbook)

* The possibility exists to develop coursework through telecommunications.

Comments: _____

APPENDIX C
COVER LETTER FOR SECRETARIAL SURVEY

Dear Secretary:

I know your time is very limited, but I need your help in gathering data which may be used to reduce job stress for you in the future by making information changes and updates more easily accessible and implemented for you. Your input is very valuable. Please complete and return the enclosed survey.

Your administrator was distributed a similar survey at the Fall Conference of OROS on October 12, 1990. With the combined input of administrators and their secretarial staff, perhaps some of the unique problems of rural schools can be reduced in order to meet the ever expanding complexities and job responsibilities of administrative staff in the field of education.

If possible, please return the attached survey to me by October 15, 1990. If enough data is received by that date, a brief summary of the findings will be discussed at the OAEOP Fall Conference to be held October 18 at the Hilton Inn in Oklahoma City. Hope to see you there, and best of wishes for a good school year!

Respectfully,

Vicki Fry, OAEOP President
Forgan Schools
Box 406
Forgan, OK 73938

APPENDIX D
COVER LETTER FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SURVEY

●OAES Oklahoma Association of Educational Secretaries

October 17, 1990

Dear Superintendent:

The enclosed surveys were distributed at the Fall OROS Conference held in Oklahoma City on Friday, October 12. Since many members were unable to attend the conference and I would like to have input from as many administrators and their secretaries as possible, I am mailing copies of the survey and asking you to please complete the administrator's survey and give the secretarial survey to your secretary for completion.

The survey will be used to project entry level workforce numbers for secretaries for the next five to ten years and to develop improved available training for entry level and existing secretaries in the field of education. Dr. Ed Chance, University of Oklahoma, has expressed that possible funding through the University of Oklahoma may be available to develop specialized workshops. These workshops would probably be available on tape or through telecommunications.

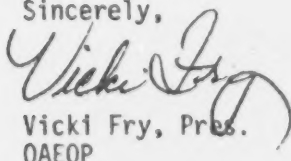
Results of this survey will be submitted to the State Department of Education, OROS, and the state secretarial organization.

Please return the surveys by mail to the below address:

Vicki Fry, Pres.
OAEOP
Forgan Public Schools
Box 406
Forgan, OK 73938

Thank you for your time. We are in hopes that advance planning will help in coping with the increasing complexities of reporting and regulations in the field of education.

Sincerely,


Vicki Fry, Pres.
OAEOP

APPENDIX E
RAW DATA OF SECRETARIAL SURVEY

EDUCATIONAL SECRETARY SURVEY

Total Survey Responses: 53

1. Your total years experience as educational secretary in Oklahoma: _____
14...under 5
12...5-9
13...10-14
7...15-20
6...over 20
2. Age: _____
0...under 30
5...30-34
16...35-39
12...40-44
8...45-49
7...50-55
4...over 55
3. Education:
53 a) High School
7 b) Junior or Technical College
6 c) Business School
20 d) 4-Yr. College
 Completed years...1.....2.....3.....4 (circle)
 (9) (3) (0) (8)
4. Have your job responsibilities increased in the last five years? 53 yes 0 no
5. Do you envision a need for specialized training/orientation for entry level educational secretaries? 52 yes 1 no
6. Do you feel training/information methods can be improved for existing secretarial staff? 53 yes 0 no
7. How many training workshops or courses have you attended during the last (1989-90) school year? _____
16...0
16...1
9...2
6...3
2...4
1...5
3...6 or more

8. Reasons for not participating in professional development
(workshops, seminars, courses, etc.)

- 23 a) lack of availability
- 4 b) personal expense
- 1 c) district expense
- 34 d) time constraints (workload, time away from work)
- 1 e) not interested
- 6 f) other (please list) (did not know about them)

9. Does your school district encourage professional development
by

- 31 a) paying tuition and/or registration fees
- 42 b) paying your total expenses (room, mileage, meals)
- 33 c) providing work release time

10. How important do you feel it is for you to be involved in
the planning of your professional development?

Very important 31 Important 21 Unimportant 0

11. What training skills are most important for your job
responsibilities?

Please rate the below areas as...

1)Very Important 2)Important 3)Unimportant

- a) computer operations
- b) school law
- c) reporting (laws & procedures)
- d) typing
- e) filing
- f) banking procedures (including investments)
- g) composing letters, memos, etc.
- h) stress management
- i) public and human relations
- j) dictation and transcribing
- k) others (please list) _____

12. Who provided job orientation/training for you in your
present position?

- 23 a) administrator
- 8 b) another secretary on staff
- 22 c) exiting secretary
- 2 d) other (please list) _____
- 10 e) none received

13. Who do you feel would provide job orientation/training should you leave your present position?

- 18 a) administrator
- 9 b) another secretary on staff
- 42 c) you, if available...time required _____
- 2 d) none would be provided

14. Do you feel the above would be difficult and time consuming? 43 yes 8 no

15. Would you have to commute over 30 minutes to an in-state college or vocational-technical school? 28 yes 16 no

16. How do you feel training needs would most effectively be met?

Entry Level Training

Experienced Level Training

- | | | |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| <u>10</u> a) | *formal college courses | a) <u>13</u> |
| <u>13</u> b) | *associate college degree (2 yr.) | b) <u>18</u> |
| <u>37</u> c) | workshops (1 day) | c) <u>33</u> |
| <u>28</u> d) | seminars (2-3 day) | d) <u>25</u> |
| <u>18</u> e) | clinics (on campus in summer) | e) <u>16</u> |
| <u>43</u> f) | educational secretary handbook | f) <u>34</u> |
| <u>20</u> g) | taped workshops by job function | g) <u>19</u> |

*The possibility exists for these to be developed and offered by a telenet location, or by telecourse (college courses via taped lectures or tapes, not requiring campus attendance.)

17. Please list what you like most about your job (1 as most liked). (This was an open question; these being the most popular responses.)

- 16 ... working with teachers
- 15 ... job related responsibilities
- 14 ... working with youth
- 8 ... job duty variety
- 8 ... challenge
- 7 ... summers free
- 3 ... self esteem

18. Please list what you like least about your job (1 as least liked). (This was an open question; these being the most popular responses.)

- 17 ... reporting
- 15 ... stress
- 12 ... extra duties placed on job
- 8 ... salary
- 8 ... telephone interruptions
- 6 ... lack of prof. recognition/training
- 5 ... responsibility

Comments:

2...secretaries should receive increments for experience

3...no available entry training

...so many job responsibilities!!!

...There is more responsibility for educational secretaries than any other secretarial job I have ever had...so many areas of job responsibilities!

...I think that there has been a very big change in the technical aspect of my job in the last 14 years and training for entry level or experienced secretaries will be necessary in the very near future.

Thank you for your input. Please return this questionnaire to the address below by October 15, 1990, if possible. Data results will be submitted to OROS, OAEOP, and the State Department of Education.

VICKI FRY
FORGAN SCHOOL
BOX 406
FORGAN, OK 73938

APPENDIX F
RAW DATA OF ADMINISTRATIVE SURVEY

ADMINISTRATOR'S SURVEY:

TRAINING NEEDS OF THE EDUCATIONAL SECRETARY

TOTAL SURVEY RESPONSE 52

1. Administrative title _____
2. Do you envision a need for specialized training/orientation for entry level educational secretaries? yes 51 no 1
3. Do you feel training/information methods can be improved for existing secretarial staff? yes 51 no 1
4. Regarding training/orientation for entry level educational secretaries, please indicate your preference:
5 a) Training to be accomplished exclusively at the local level by administration or existing staff.
47 b) Prefer specialized training be developed by State Department of Education, professional organization, or post-secondary curriculum
5. How do you feel entry training needs would best be met? (Rank in order of preference, 1 being most preferred.)

Preference using weighted method of ranking:

- * 5th a) college courses
- * 4th b) 2 yr. associate degree designed for educational secretaries
- 1st c) specialized training workshops, clinics, etc
- 3rd d) above available on video tape by job function
- 2nd e) secretarial handbook (similar to adm. handbook)

* The possibility exists to develop coursework through telecommunications.

The rankings using raw data for the above were the following:

- a) 2 ranked #1; 2, #2; 2, #3; 18, #4; 24, #5...Total Score, 204
- b) 4 ranked #1; 5, #2; 9, #3; 18, #4; 13, #5...Total Score, 178
- c) 43 ranked #1; 4, #2; 3, #3; 1, #4; 0, #5...Total Score, 64
- d) 3 ranked #1; 19, #2; 14, #3; 7, #4; 5, #5...Total Score, 136
- e) 3 ranked #1; 19, #2; 20, #3; 3, #4; 4, #5...Total Score, 133

Comments: _____

APPENDIX F
RAW DATA OF ADMINISTRATIVE SURVEY

ADMINISTRATOR'S SURVEY:

TRAINING NEEDS OF THE EDUCATIONAL SECRETARY

TOTAL SURVEY RESPONSE 52

1. Administrative title _____
2. Do you envision a need for specialized training/orientation for entry level educational secretaries? yes 51 no 1
3. Do you feel training/information methods can be improved for existing secretarial staff? yes 51 no 1
4. Regarding training/orientation for entry level educational secretaries, please indicate your preference:
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* The possibility exists to develop coursework through telecommunications.

The rankings using raw data for the above were the following:

- a) 2 ranked #1; 2, #2; 2, #3; 18, #4; 24, #5...Total Score, 204
- b) 4 ranked #1; 5, #2; 9, #3; 18, #4; 13, #5...Total Score, 178
- c) 43 ranked #1; 4, #2; 3, #3; 1, #4; 0, #5...Total Score, 64
- d) 3 ranked #1; 19, #2; 14, #3; 7, #4; 5, #5...Total Score, 136
- e) 3 ranked #1; 19, #2; 20, #3; 3, #4; 4, #5...Total Score, 133

Comments: _____

APPENDIX G

OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF SUBMITTED REPORT



Oklahoma State Department of Education

SANDY GARRETT

STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

January 22, 1991

Ms. Vicki Fry
Forgan Public Schools
P.O. Box 406
Forgan, Oklahoma

Dear Ms. Fry: *Vicki*

I received your letter and research paper, and I appreciate your sending it to me. The information is most interesting. I plan to forward it to Superintendent Garrett for her to look over as I think she would be most interested in your findings.

Thank you for sharing your results with me. Please feel free to call on me again if I can be of any further help to you.

I wish you continued success as you complete your degree program.

Sincerely,

Sharon A. Lease, Ed.D.
Associate Superintendent
Planning and Information

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